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PAGAN VERSUS CHRISTIAN ETHICS

SIR,—It is disconcerting, to say the least, to read in Mr. Edwin Davies Schoonmaker's article, "Constantinople—and Then?", in the April number of your REVIEW, that a Power with which we are allied will probably avoid the keeping of its solemn promise to Russia as regards Constantinople. Is this to develop another "scrap of paper" incident? In this connection I am reminded that ethical standards vary. There is a quotation from the Psalms that reads like this:

Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy holy hill? . . .

He that sweareth to his neighbor and disappointeth him not, though it were to his own hindrance.

But note the following from *De Officiis*:

Nam promissa igitur servanda sunt ea, quae sint iis, quibus promiseris, inutilia, nec, si plus tibi ea noceant quam illi prosint, cui promiseris, contra officium est maius anteponi minori. . . . Iam illis promissis standum non esse quis non videt, quae coactus quis metu quae deceptus dolo promiserit?

But one may doubt, in reading *De Officiis*, that even a pagan would justify such a breach of faith as Mr. Schoonmaker assumes a Christian nation would make almost as a matter of course.

ELBERT B. HOLMES.

ST. ANN'S RECTORY,
RICHFORD, VT.

A FANTASTIC ASCRIPTION

SIR,—Whenever I pick up THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, I do so with a feeling that I shall surely find therein many things worth while to read. Perhaps it is because of that feeling that I am moved to protest or to ask how is it possible for you to accept such an article as that entitled "What are the Churches to do?" which appeared in a recent issue of your magazine? I do not mind such slush appearing in some magazines with which we are afflicted, for in the latter case one can always find relief by dropping the magazine in the waste-basket.

I object to the article in question for two reasons. In the first place, it is an insult to Catholics, and you should not permit your magazine to be used as a means to insult the center of Catholic worship—the Mass—which has been believed in by the majority of Christians in every age, by scientists and men of profoundest learning, as well as by the uneducated. The beliefs expressed by the writer are as closely allied to Confucianism as they are to Christianity, for the writer apparently disbelieves in every fundamental doctrine of Christianity. Why select a writer to descant on a subject in which he does not believe? Would you do that if you wanted an article on electricity?

B. B. HARRIGAN.

WALLA WALLA, WASH.

[We are unable to understand how it is possible to see, in an article so evidently inspired by a deep love of religious truth as was Dr. McConnell's,

an "insult" to any Christian or non-Christian faith. But it is one of the depressing anomalies of religious experience that any pious hypocrite can enrapture multitudes by lifting up his voice in "the bleat of evangelical orthodoxy," whereas the honest seeker after spiritual realities takes his life in his hands.—EDITOR.]

A COMPLIMENT MISUNDERSTOOD

SIR,—I am sorry to say the headline, "A Pro-Ally German-American," which you gave to my recent letter, indicates that you missed the point of it. I strongly protest against being called a German-American, since it is an entirely erroneous description, my ancestors on all sides having been in America from two hundred to two hundred and fifty years. I am as purely and thoroughly American as anyone. I regret having to state that such an appellation was to me most surprising and distasteful.

JOHN L. SCHWARTZ.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

[We are sorry that a lapse from tact on our part has caused our friend unhappiness. We had assumed from the tone of his letter that he was as proud of his German descent as Mr. Roosevelt so often affirms that he is of his. There was no thought on our part of questioning Mr. Schwartz's Americanism—which we hereby recognize and salute: we had meant rather to pay him a compliment. Incidentally we would remind Mr. Schwartz that whether his forebears came to this country two hundred years or five years ago is immaterial to the fact of his Americanism. Some of the most unquestionably and passionately loyal Americans we know have grandparents who are so unfortunate as to be subjects of the abhorrent paranoiac who is, God grant, the last of the Kaisers.

—EDITOR.]